

Leaders Statement

Local Enterprise Partnerships

A significant amount of my time is being spent at the moment attending meetings relating to Local Enterprise Partnerships.

I am a member of the Leeds Local Enterprise Partnership Board as well as the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Board. Both are moving forwards but the latter is doing so in a particularly practical way.

The York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP has recently launched a “network of networks” project to connect together over 20,000 businesses in the sub-region. There is a website to support the network and it will become a means of providing advice and support that is no longer available from Business Link. It is also developing a certificate of business that will be a qualification taken by people trying to start a business and will be hopefully used by Banks to help to agree financial support. A number of major Banks have already agreed to recognise this qualification in their loan assessment processes. The LEP is also considering how to utilise over £6m worth of funding from the Government’s Growing Places Fund. In addition it has a number of projects underway to help key sectors of the North Yorkshire economy such as food and tourism. The LEP is also submitting an application to DEFRA to become one of the pilot areas within the country to try and establish a rural growth zone for North Yorkshire.

North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board

Earlier this month I chaired the first meeting of the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board. This meeting brought together Executive members for Adults and Children, Senior Officers from the Council along with representatives from District Councils and key health partners. The meeting is an interesting combination of cultures and I was very pleased that the first meeting was productive and laid down a solid foundation for the Council’s new role in health. The key priorities of the Board will be to look at setting the strategic priorities for health and social care across North Yorkshire, overseeing an assessment of need across the county, promoting the integration of health and social care as much as we can for the benefit of patients and people who use our care services and to oversee strategic developments across the county. The Health and Wellbeing Board exists alongside the Scrutiny of Health Board and we need to ensure that there isn’t a confusion between the two.

Local Government Funding Review

The final issue I want to mention is the response that the Government has made to its consultation on the future funding of Local Government. It has confirmed that there will be a direct link made to local business rates. This will be stronger for District Councils than for County Councils. The Government intends to bring in its new system for 2013/14 and will make announcements in the Autumn of the initial base line position for Councils which will be crucial to us for our future financial planning.